

mountain is much lighter on the vent than those from Papallacta. At the latter locality we found this bird frequenting the open meadows in the early morning.

Family PTEROPTOCHIDÆ.

313. SCYTALOPUS MAGELLANICUS (Lath.).

Four males and 1 female from Pichincha and Papallacta. The single male from the latter locality has the breast of a comparatively light slate-colour. The female is more rusty-looking on the wings than the males. We found these birds difficult to shoot, for they hop along the ground so quickly that they are lost to sight among the bushes at once.

314. SCYTALOPUS SENILIS Lafr.

One example from Pichincha, Western Andes, 13,000 feet, and one from Papallacta, Eastern Andes, 11,500 feet. Both are marked "males," but the Pichincha bird is decidedly the lightest on the throat and abdomen and is white above the nostrils. Both are brownish about the thighs and vent.

315. ACROPTERNIS ORTHONYX (Lafr.).

We shot two males and two females of this bird, one pair near the little village of Lloa and the other pair by the waterfall a thousand feet above Quito, both localities being on the eastern side of Pichincha. This is where Festa obtained the examples which Count Salvadori has described as *A. infuscatus*\*. I have compared our skins with those in the British Museum, and they appear to belong to typical *A. orthonyx*. The females are more rusty-looking on the breast and under parts.

[To be continued.]

---

V.—Forty-four Days' Nesting in Andalusia.

By HEATLEY NOBLE, F.Z.S.

THE ornithology of the south of Spain has been so well worked out by the late Lord Lilford, Colonel Irby, Mr. Howard Saunders, Mr. Dresser, and others that it seems almost an

\* See 'Ibis,' 1900, p. 394.

impertinence for one who has done so little to venture to take up his pen; yet, on the principle that "every little helps," I send to 'The Ibis' a few notes on the district extending from a few miles south of Seville to the mouth of the Guadalquivir near San Lucar.

To my mind, the great charm of a birds'-nesting trip to the south of Spain consists in the fact that many species which may be common in one spot are not found ten or fifteen miles further on; others taking their place, even when, to the human eye, the country seems to be equally suited to their requirements. Practically the breeding-season lasts from January to July, beginning with the Bearded Vulture in the first month, and ending with the Flamingo and Black-bellied Sand-Grouse; but, owing to the short time at my disposal, I missed many of the earlier species and a few of the later breeders. The actual days in the field numbered forty-four, and two others were wasted: one in seeing a bull-fight, the other on account of an election, when my men fell victims to the bottle! The drawbacks to Andalusia seem to me to be much exaggerated: the climate is hot, but otherwise perfect, and although snakes, scorpions, leeches, and lizards abound, the visitor soon gets used to them; mosquitoes, however, are a trouble, especially when he is blowing eggs or skinning birds late at night. The peasants are civil, and if they would not shoot every game-bird and duck from its nest, and eat all the eggs on which they can lay their hands, I should like them very well. It was heart-breaking to find dozens of egg-shells of the Slender-billed Gull lying outside a horse-keeper's house, the contents having been eaten!

The first nest was taken on April 14th and the last on May 29th; but, although the days were few in number, our hours of work were long—often from 5.30 A.M. till dark; then blowing eggs continued till after 12 P.M. In all, eggs of ninety-four species were taken or seen, and I believe that one is recorded from Spain for the first time, namely the Pintail (*Dafila acuta*). I was fortunate in obtaining permission to visit several Cotos, and my thanks are especially due to

Mr. Buck for his kindness in allowing me to stay at the celebrated Coto Doñana.

SAXICOLA ALBICOLLIS.

Only one pair seen; the nest, in a hole in a bank, was composed of roots and lined with fine grass; it contained five fresh eggs on May 10th.

PRATINCOLA RUBICOLA.

An early breeder, full-fledged young were found on April 14th; incubated and fresh eggs up to April 18th. Stonechats were very abundant at first, but towards the end of May most of them had disappeared.

DAULIAS LUSCINIA.

Very common; the first nest was found on May 12th, and young were seen on the wing on May 28th.

SYLVIA MELANOCEPHALA.

Common; fresh eggs from April 14th onwards. I never saw more than four in a nest, and these were subject to great variation.

SYLVIA ORPHEA.

Common; fresh eggs from May 10th. The nests were placed from 10 to 15 feet from the ground, in olive and other trees, generally at the extreme end of a bough; they were slight in construction, and were made of coarse grasses lined with finer materials. Two nests contained three incubated eggs each, one had seven that were fresh.

MELIZOPHILUS UNDATUS.

The Dartford Warbler is fairly numerous in suitable localities, and is an early breeder. On April 14th we found four eggs slightly incubated; on April 15th, four and three hatching; on May 1st, four fresh (possibly the first nest had been destroyed). I do not think that this species breeds twice, as we never saw eggs again. Three out of these four nests contained *red-spotted* eggs; the male was incubating in two cases and the female in one. The nests were well made, rather deep, and in every case placed in *dead* gorse.

## HYPOLAIS POLYGLOTTA.

Common near the river. On May 27th many nests were taken with from three to five eggs, nearly all fresh; they were mostly in low bushes, well concealed, and made of grass, lined with hair or fine grass.

## HYPOLAIS OPACA.

More abundant than the former species; several nests were found in tamarisk-bushes near the river. These nests, often much exposed, were deep, cup-shaped, and made of grass, well lined with cotton-down, thistle-down, and in one case with sheep's wool; the lowest was about 4 feet from the ground, the highest about 12 feet. No nest contained more than four eggs, and some of these were slightly incubated on May 28th.

## ACROCEPHALUS TURDOIDES.

Very numerous on the river-banks wherever reeds were found; their harsh song might be heard all through the day and most of the night. On May 7th they were just beginning to lay, and we found nests with from one to three eggs; on May 24th we saw others containing from four to six eggs, mostly incubated. The nests are counterparts of those of our Reed-Warbler, though of course on a larger scale; very substantial, deep, and easily found.

## ACROCEPHALUS STREPERUS.

Not very common. Nests found from May 7th to May 28th.

## CETTIA CETTII.

The first nests found, on May 6th, contained four eggs each, one clutch too much incubated for preservation; others with four and five eggs on May 11th and after. They were all in tamarisk-bushes near the river, compactly put together, deep, made of grass, and lined with horsehair. Unlike those mentioned by Col. Irby, these nests were placed almost in the open and were quite easily seen. The bird seems to be very local, but numerous where it is found.

## CISTICOLA CURSITANS.

Found commonly in all suitable localities. On April 14th we took four beautiful little nests and found another with the eggs just hatching. These were all in spear-rushes about 2 feet from the ground, and were formed of several stems fastened together with spiders' webs and interwoven with fine grass; they were 3 or 4 inches deep, drawn together slightly at the top and rounded off. They were lined with dandelion- and other flower-down, and were exceedingly difficult to find. Two broods may possibly be reared in the season, as nests are often found when cutting barley at the end of May, and I saw one on May 5th with nearly fresh eggs. These are subject to the most extraordinary variation in colour:—

1. Four fresh eggs, light blue, fine red lines and dots all over them.
2. Six fresh eggs; red spots on white ground.
3. Six fresh eggs; all white.
4. Six much incubated eggs; all blue.
5. Four eggs on the point of hatching; lighter blue.
6. Four fresh eggs; white, fine red lines. April 16th.
7. Five slightly incubated eggs; very pale blue. May 5th.

} April 14th.

## PARUS MAJOR.

Common; nests found with fresh eggs, April 17th to 29th.

## MOTACILLA FLAVA.

Common, especially on the marismas. Fresh eggs were found on May 5th and young birds on May 7th, so laying is rather irregular. All the nests that I saw contained five or six eggs; they were built in scrub, near, but not quite on, the ground.

## LANIUS MERIDIONALIS.

Very local; an early breeder. On April 15th I found a nest with young just ready to fly, and was told of another from which full-fledged young had been taken three weeks before. On the same day we saw some with three fresh

eggs and other birds building, probably, second nests ; these were never more than 10 feet from the ground, in olive and other thick trees, and were of large size and made of roots and sticks lined with grass. The boys catch these Shrikes in winter in "clap-nets" and sell them as cage-birds, consequently they have been much reduced in numbers.

LANIUS POMERANUS.

Abundant. The first nests with eggs were found on May 2nd ; later on numbers were seen. They are usually placed in a fork or on a bough of some small tree ; I did not find one in a bush. Six is the usual number of eggs, which vary considerably in pattern and colour. In one exceptionally early nest on May 21st young birds were fully fledged and flew out as I touched them.

HIRUNDO RUSTICA.

Very common ; nesting in many of the farm-buildings.

CHELIDON URBICA.

Local ; many were breeding in Seville and on a station just outside.

CARDUELIS ELEGANS.

One of the commonest birds ; it must rear at least two, if not three, broods in the season. We saw fresh eggs on April 14th, and continually till May 27th, when two nests were found, both with five fresh eggs.

SERINUS HORTULANUS.

Local ; one nest with nearly fresh eggs found on May 2nd. It was 15 feet from the ground in the slender twigs of an olive-tree. One of us had to stand on the back of a horse to reach it, and unfortunately smashed the eggs !

LIGURINUS CHLORIS.

Common in gardens, &c. ; fresh eggs April 14th, 15th, and 17th.

PASSER DOMESTICUS.

Common in villages. One nest in a tree contained the large number of seven eggs.

EMBERIZA MILIARIA.

Numerous in cultivated districts. Fresh eggs April 16th; others on May 6th were slightly incubated.

GALERITA CRISTATA.

Exceedingly common on the corn-lands, and found breeding right up to the edges of the so-called "mountains." Many nests were seen, from April 14th to the last day of our stay, with fresh eggs. The Crested Lark was often sitting on three eggs, but we took some nests with four and a few with five.

MELANOCORYPHA CALANDRA.

Common; more so in the large grass-fields near the river than on the cultivated land. We found a few nests from May 5th onwards; one on May 20th contained four young and two infertile eggs. This bird is easily distinguished on the wing from the other Larks seen in the same locality, not only by its size, but by the white edgings of the secondaries, which are very conspicuous in flight.

STURNUS UNICOLOR.

Local, but very numerous in certain districts. From a large pigeon-house I took sixty eggs, and could have collected as many dozens had I wished, for the birds were there in swarms, and had driven the pigeons away to such an extent that the owner meditated their destruction. On April 26th most of the nests had sets of six or seven eggs very slightly incubated. The note seemed to me to be much softer than that of our bird, but in habits and mode of nesting I could see no difference.

Whilst on the subject of Starlings, I may mention that last winter several thousand dozens of *S. vulgaris* were netted on the Island of Tarfia, and the skins sent to Paris, where they fetched  $2\frac{1}{2}d.$  each!

CYANOPICA COOKI.

Common in the pine-woods. The first nest was found on April 24th, and contained six fresh eggs; but general laying

did not begin till ten days later. The lowest nest was not more than five feet from the ground, and the highest about thirty. Four to seven eggs is the usual clutch; eight were found once.

PICA RUSTICA.

Locally common. In one district it simply swarmed, breeding in low cork-trees and in bramble-bushes only a few feet high; one nest containing eggs was no higher than my knee. I noticed that many of those in the thick bramble-bushes were not roofed. On April 24th most nests contained full complements of eggs, some of them having as many as eight.

CORVUS MONEDULA.

Common, but local. Many nests in holes in the old cork-trees, with fresh eggs on April 26th.

CORVUS CORAX.

Common, nesting mostly in the pine-woods. It seems curious that a bird which breeds so early in this country should be so much later in the South\*. The first full clutch of fresh eggs taken was on May 1st, and consisted of six; subsequently we obtained several nests with from five to seven, and on May 21st there were young just hatched. Ravens' nests can easily be distinguished from below from Kites', Buzzards', &c., by their much rounder and neater appearance. They are also deeper, and smaller sticks are used in the construction.

CYPSELUS APUS.

Very common in some of the villages and still more so in Seville, where it was nesting by scores under the eaves of the houses on May 30th.

CAPRIMULGUS RUFICOLLIS.

Common. I saw many birds, but did not find eggs

\* Mr. Saunders tells me that he found Ravens feeding large young on March 18th, 1868, at Baza, in the Province of Granada; so it is possible that those which I found were second nests; but, if this is the case, it seems curious that I never met with a young fledged Raven of the year.



myself. A clutch of two fresh eggs was brought to me on May 11th, and another on May 16th.

GEVINUS SHARPII.

Common locally, and a very early breeder. I found young more than half-grown on April 27th. One nest was in a hole in a large cork-tree almost *on* the ground. A Spanish Imperial Eagle had a nest in the next tree. On May 1st and May 16th two full sets of eggs were taken, nearly fresh! At the base of the beak of the young I noticed the peculiar knob mentioned by Mr. Gurney ('Zoologist,' 1901, p. 128) as occurring in *G. viridis*.

CORACIAS GARRULUS.

Common, but the nests are hard to find. Rollers are rather late breeders, and it was not till May 26th that we took a set of five fresh eggs from a hole in a tree. Another nest in a Moorish tower, on May 29th, also contained five eggs slightly incubated. Little or no actual nest is, however, made, as a rule; but I watched one pair of birds pulling up grass and carrying it away to a distance, presumably for building purposes, though I failed to discover the breeding-place.

MEROPS APIASTER.

In spite of snaring, shooting, and netting, Bee-eaters are still quite common, though the natives say that they are not nearly so numerous as formerly. They nest in the banks of the rivers and on roadsides, and even excavate their holes in the flat ground. These slant downwards, some being nearly three yards long; while they are generally straight, though one was noticed to have a turn nearly at right angles. The holes seem unnecessarily large for the size of the bird, and a cavity is formed where the eggs are deposited. Hoopoes occasionally make use of old nesting-holes of the Bee-eater. It was not till May 24th that laying was in full progress: six eggs seem to be the usual complement.

COCCYSTES GLANDARIUS.

Extremely local. At the Coto Doñana I never saw the Great Spotted Cuckoo nor did I find its egg, although Magpies' nests were numerous; yet it was abundant sixteen

miles away. On April 24th and 25th we took several eggs. The very first Magpie's nest which I saw contained seven Cuckoo's eggs and three of the rightful owner: they were in all stages of incubation, from fresh to nearly hatching. Other nests held three Cuckoo's and five Magpie's eggs, two and five, four and three, one and one, &c. When the nests were in the open cork-trees they were nearly sure to contain Cuckoos' eggs; when they were placed in thick bushes, very rarely. The natives say that the reason of this is that the Cuckoo prefers an open tree, in order that she may make off on the return of the owner; and certainly, whenever we saw a fight (which was pretty often) the Magpie had much the best of it. I expect that the true explanation is that the nests in trees are much more accessible. The only egg which we took from a nest other than that of a Magpie was in that of a Raven built at the top of a very large pine-tree; the nest contained six Raven's eggs and one of the Cuckoo on May 1st, all quite fresh. This was the only egg of the Cuckoo found in that particular district; and as five boys living close by were all on the look-out, it is unlikely that there were many others. Curiously enough, Messrs. Selous and Musters found young Ravens and a Cuckoo in the same nest in 1900.

#### STRIX FLAMMEA.

Fairly common; nesting in holes in trees, and once found in a Moorish tower. April 26th, six fresh eggs in an old cork-tree; May 7th, four young just hatched.

#### SCOPS GIU.

Not conspicuous; few seen, but more heard. The Scops is much more nocturnal than the Little Owl, and I never saw one flying in daylight unless disturbed; moreover, it breeds later. It was not till May 20th that an egg was found, on which the female was sitting; on May 25th and May 27th we obtained two and three which were fresh; in each case the female was on them. My man caught another incubating a single egg, and placed her in a cage, where she laid an egg each day until seven had been deposited, when she was liberated.

## ATHENE NOCTUA.

Very common. Eggs were found from April 24th, the bird often sitting on three only, while the largest number in one nest was five. They are laid at intervals of one or two days. One nest was *on the ground*, inside a large cork-tree. In nearly every case the female was incubating. Young birds were found on May 14th.

## CIRCUS ÆRUGINOSUS.

Common, especially by the river, where they nest in the reeds. On May 6th we found seven nests in the almost impenetrable reeds on Tarfia: in some the eggs were fresh, in others incubation was far advanced. One contained five, one four, one three, the others only two; but as thirty dozen eggs of Purple Herons and "Kites" were taken by one set of fishermen from this island last year, it is possible that the clutches were incomplete though incubated. The nests were made of rushes, and were situated lower in the reeds than those of the Heron, while they were very substantial: one nearly carried my weight. As a rule, they were not in quite such thick places, and *one* was on the ground in a nearly clear spot. The birds sat close; we never flushed a male from the nest. Four nearly fresh eggs were found on May 15th in the marisma on a little scrub bush. One male had his crop full of remains of eggs.

## CIRCUS CINERACEUS.

Not so common as the last species and more local. We only found it numerous in one large enclosure of high grass and rough weeds, where, on May 7th, we took five nests, containing four or five eggs each, which were slightly incubated or fresh. They were all placed *on the ground*, and were well made, one having many feathers in it. In each case the female was on the nest, and from one which was killed I took the leg of a Quail. This Harrier sits very closely: I marked one hen bird on her nest, and four men walked in line ten yards apart till I was convinced we had passed her: we turned round and walked past once more; still she declined to move. I then fired two shots without result; but it was

not until one of the men had almost trodden upon her that she rose from four fresh eggs. One clutch was slightly marked with red ; all the others were white.

*BUTEO VULGARIS.*

Common in the pine-woods. Incubated eggs were found on April 14th, and young some days old on April 16th. The clutch generally consists of two eggs, and we only once saw three in Spain.

*AQUILA PENNATA.*

The Booted Eagle is not rare. Nests were found in pine- and cork-trees. In the first, on April 25th, the eggs were so well marked that I had to shoot the female for identification, and she is now in the British Museum. The nest is large, sometimes placed on a bough, but more often in the centre of the tree towards the top. The female sits very closely. There were two eggs in each nest, and even those found on May 11th were fresh.

*AQUILA ADALBERTI.*

The Spanish Imperial Eagle is now rare. A nest shown me by a keeper on April 27th contained two white but very dirty eggs, on the point of hatching. This nest was at the top of a large cork-tree ; the female left it when we were a long way off and did not return. The next day another nest was seen, also high up in a cork-tree, with two large young and a rotten egg. Two half-eaten rats lay at the foot of the tree.

*CIRCAËTUS GALLICUS.*

A few observed. On April 27th a nest was found with the usual single egg, very much incubated, and on the 28th another with one that was quite fresh ; both of these were in cork-trees, one out on a bough, the other near the top. In the very next tree, not twenty yards away, was a Booted Eagle's nest, in the next tree but one a Red Kite had her young, the Imperial Eagle's nest with nestlings was not a hundred yards off, and a Green Woodpecker had young in the same tree !

**MILVUS ICTINUS.**

The Red Kite is much more local than the Black Kite and not nearly so plentiful. Like most of the resident birds, it breeds early. From April the 27th to the 29th we found several nests, but they all contained young or eggs on the point of hatching; one nest had three eggs without spots. Most of the Red Kite's nests had three eggs (about eleven nests were found); whereas I saw dozens of those of the Black Kite, but only found three eggs in a few cases, even when incubation was far advanced.

**MILVUS MIGRANS.**

The Black Kite is very common, sometimes breeding in small colonies, and in one of the pine-woods I counted twenty-three birds in the air together. The first eggs were seen on April 16th, but laying did not fully commence till quite ten days later. I could see no difference between the nests of this and of the last species; both were adorned with "lesser linen" and once with cigarette-paper and some old printed matter. Personally I found no lottery-tickets, but I know of one having been found! The eggs are generally smaller and rounder than those of the Red Kite.

**FALCO TINNUNCULUS.**

Abundant, laying in old nests of the Kite, Raven, and Buzzard, also in holes of trees, and often in old nests of Magpies; fresh eggs were found from April 16th.

**FALCO CENCHRIS.**

The Lesser Kestrel is not so common as the last-named, and breeds much later. The first eggs taken, an incomplete clutch of three, were in a hole in a tree on May 10th. On May 27th I took clutches of four and five from similar holes, very slightly incubated and fresh. One set of eggs, on which I caught the old bird, was not five feet from the ground. On May 29th fresh clutches of four and five respectively were taken from an old Moorish tower, and, judging from the number of birds flying round, many of them had not even then begun to lay.

**ARDEA PURPUREA.**

Purple Herons were very numerous; their large nests are

built of dead rushes, from four to ten feet from the ground, in swamps and reed-beds. Some nests contained five eggs, but three or four were more usual. On April 27th we found them fresh and incubated, and young on May 14th. Three nests were on low tamarisk-bushes in the middle of a large colony of the smaller species of Herons.

*ARDEA GARZETTA.*

The Little Egret is common locally. On bushes in Laguna Taraja, in the carefully preserved Coto Doñana, I found this bird breeding in some numbers. The nests were slight platforms of sticks placed on tamarisks growing in water three or four feet deep, and many had full sets of four and five eggs on April 27th.

*ARDEA BUBULCUS.*

The Buff-backed Heron is more numerous than the last-named, and breeds in the same place and at the same time: full sets of eggs were found on April 27th. It is also much tamer and will sit quietly whilst you wait within a few yards, though this is not necessary to identify the eggs, which are always much lighter in colour than those of the Little Egret or the Night-Heron.

*NYCTICORAX GRISEUS.*

Local, and breeds later than the above-mentioned species. On our first visit to the Heron-colony (April 27th) the Night-Herons had hardly begun to lay, and none were sitting. On May 14th we watched several to their nests, which contained from three to four (we never saw five) slightly incubated eggs. The nests were placed rather high up in the bushes, and when disturbed the birds did not return readily. These eggs are valueless if not identified, for they cannot with certainty be distinguished from those of the Little Egret, though they are generally a little larger.

*ARDEA RALLOÏDES.*

The Squacco is the rarest of the Spanish Herons; it was breeding in the aforesaid colony, but rather later. In April we did not see a bird, but on May 14th we found several nests with from three to six eggs, all fresh. The nests are better

made than those of the other species, and often had a few rushes used in their construction; the eggs are much smaller and cannot be mistaken.

*ARDETTA MINUTA.*

The Little Bittern is very common in certain districts. We found fresh eggs on May 7th; on the 18th five nests, containing five, five, five, four, and three eggs respectively, all fresh. Four of these nests were on boughs, under the sheltering heads of young willows pollarded last year but with a fresh growth of a foot or more; they were surrounded by high rushes growing in water four feet deep, and were flat, rather like those of the Wood-Pigeon, with some dead rushes in them. It was not difficult to see them, as the white eggs showed up plainly; but the wading to them was a hard task, owing to the matted rushes in the water. On May 20th and May 24th many nests were found in reed-beds on another part of the river; upwards of twenty in course of building, or containing from one to six eggs, being seen in a single morning; these were in high reeds, which were very difficult to get through, and were composed of dead rushes placed a few feet above the water. Two clutches were much incubated.

*BOTAURUS STELLARIS.*

We never saw or heard this bird, though I am told that it is common in certain seasons; two fresh eggs were taken on the wet marisma Las Nuevas and brought to me on May 15th.

*CICONIA ALBA.*

One of the most conspicuous birds, common everywhere. A regular colony was found in some high trees on April 18th. Many nests contained four or five eggs, all slightly incubated.

*PLATALEA LEUCORODIA.*

Not common. About fourteen pairs were found breeding on an island of rushes growing in deepish water; on May 14th several nests contained one egg, and one three. They were much like those of the Purple Heron, but smaller and placed nearer to the water.

**PLEGADIS FALCINELLUS.**

Glossy Ibises were rather rare: we only met with them once, when three pairs had nests among those of the small Herons. These were placed in bushes six feet from the water; they are deeper and many rushes are used in their construction. Ibises seem to be irregular in their time of breeding, for last season many nests were found with fresh eggs in June, while ours contained three or four eggs on April 27th.

**ANAS BOSCAS.**

Common everywhere, in spite of the wretched females being shot on their nests on every opportunity by the Spaniards. Fresh eggs were found April 29th; the first young on May 8th.

**CHAULELASMUS STREPERUS.**

The Gadwall was common; we found a nest on April 28th, with ten fresh eggs, in a clump of spear-rush twenty yards from the edge of a lake, and saw several other eggs taken by the "egg-eaters."

**MARMARONETTA ANGUSTIROSTRIS.**

I was lucky to hit upon a good season for Marbled Teal, for they are often absent from Spain for several years in succession, while at other times they appear in numbers. We found them very common, both on the marisma and on the river. They are confiding, and it is easy to obtain specimens, as they often allow a boat to approach within gun-shot, and even if they rise wildly they fly straight back. Their flight is swift, and they can turn with rapidity. A nest was found on May 14th in a clump of rushes close to a laguna, with eleven fresh eggs and a little down; another some distance from the water and close to the side of a fence-post, on May 18th, contained the large number of fifteen eggs. It was a slight hollow in high grass, lined with down and feathers.

**QUERQUEDULA CRECCA.**

On May 23rd I flushed a small Duck from a dry spot on Lucio Real, which I thought was a Teal; there was no nest, but a slight hollow had been scratched out under a thistle.



We returned to the spot on May 25th, when the female again rose close to me and proved that I was right. The nest then contained two eggs.

*DAFILA ACUTA.*

On Lucio Real one of my men flushed and killed a Pintail from her nest on May 5th. The nest contained eight incubated eggs and a plentiful supply of down. I am, moreover, perfectly convinced that I found another nest with six broken eggs near the same spot on May 23rd. In Scotland, abroad, and with tame birds, I have always noticed that the Pintail makes its nest in much more exposed situations than any other European Duck with which I am acquainted. The eggs seem to be of two colours—very light yellowish and a distinct green: the down from the nest cannot be mistaken for that of any other Duck known to me. A Spaniard who has spent his life duck-shooting on the marisma, when shown the eggs, exclaimed, "They belong to the 'Pato rabudo.'" I questioned him closely, and he assured me that he had several times found the nest and shot the female, and that this species always nested in the open, thus confirming my own experience. Such men kill so many during the winter, and the bird is so well known to them, that I have no reason to doubt my informant. Possibly these Pintails may be "pricked" birds, which are unable to leave in the spring, and therefore remain to breed.

*FULIGULA FERINA.*

A few observed. One nest was taken on the marisma on May 15th, with slightly incubated eggs; it was under a bunch of scrub in a wet place. A party collecting Coot's eggs showed me four eggs which, I believe, also belonged to this species.

*COLUMBA PALUMBUS.*

Not very common. Nests found from April 26th onwards.

*TURTUR COMMUNIS.*

Very common, and large flocks were seen on April 17th. Only one nest was actually found, on May 11th, and that accidentally.

## PTEROCLES ALCHATA.

Local: very wild and difficult of approach; seen in small parties of six or seven at the beginning of May and later in pairs. As the birds rise they utter their harsh cry and continue calling on the wing. I never saw one settle within sight. We obtained four sets of three or two eggs from May 22nd to May 25th, all fresh. No nest is made, but the eggs are deposited under the shelter of a thistle or other plant on the sun-baked marisma. In my small experience they are not very difficult to find; the female always behaved in the same way, rising at a distance of from sixty to a hundred yards and uttering her wild cry, whereupon I marked the spot as nearly as possible, put down a handkerchief, came back twenty yards and commenced to hunt in a circle, and in every case the eggs were found. If a *pair* rise, there are no eggs.

## CACCABIS RUFA.

Common, in spite of nets, traps, call-birds, and every engine of destruction, in and out of season. One nest of thirteen eggs was seen on May 2nd.

## COTURNIX COMMUNIS.

Common, and persecuted all the year round. Fresh eggs were shown me on April 14th, and young were seen on the wing on May 12th.

## RALLUS AQUATICUS.

Probably more common than would appear. We only found one nest, which was in high rushes, on May 2nd; it contained two eggs.

## PORZANA BAILLONI.

Common, if you know where to look for it. We found eleven nests with eggs from May 2nd to May 20th, and many others which had been trampled upon by cattle or had had the eggs eaten by rats and pigs! In every case but one the nests were placed in low rushes and grass growing in water from a few inches to a foot or more deep. They were never in the middle of the swamp, but within twenty yards of the sides. The nests are neat little structures, made of dry

rush, with the growing rushes bent over to form a perfect cover. They are generally hard to find, as it is often impossible to see the eggs from above; but at times they are easily discovered, the very cleverness of the bird leading to detection. A ball of reeds excites suspicion: open it, and the eggs are disclosed. They vary considerably in size and colour; one nest, from which I shot the female, contained examples almost like those of the Siberian Jay, while others were brown throughout. A complete clutch never consisted of fewer than six eggs, and sometimes of seven or eight, one contained nine. They are often piled up one above the other. They are usually smaller and always more glossy than eggs of the Little Crake. One nest, containing eight eggs, was found in the marisma, near a colony of Black Terns.

#### GALLINULA CHLOROPUS.

Common. We saw many nests with eggs from May 4th to May 26th, on the wet marisma.

#### FULICA ATRA.

Very abundant. The eggs are collected by the basketful and sold for eating. Nests seen from April 19th; young on May 18th.

#### FULICA CRISTATA.

Local: breeds earlier than the last species; we found some eggs on the point of hatching on April 27th and all the others were much incubated. Col. Irby says (Ornith. Straits of Gibraltar, ed. 2, p. 145) "the eggs are not to be distinguished from those of the Common Coot (*F. atra*)."

With due respect for such an authority, my own experience is different and so is that of Mr. F. C. Selous. In all the nests of the Crested Coot which I saw the eggs were much redder in ground-colour and also larger: out of the hundreds taken on the marismas (where *F. cristata* does not breed) I never found one approaching such a colour; in fact, a single Crested Coot's egg could easily be detected if placed with any number of the others. The nests I saw were also different, being more substantial and not covered with the bower-like screen

of bent rushes. I hatched one of the Crested Coot's eggs in bed; the chick is very different from that of *F. atra*.

#### OTIS TARDA.

Common. Two eggs which we found on May 7th were placed on a bare spot in the middle of a large grass enclosure; there was no nest—not even a scratch. The female must have run a long way from the eggs, as she rose nowhere near them. On May 10th we obtained two more eggs. Both sets were slightly incubated.

#### OTIS TETRAX.

Local, but not rare. Little Bustards are often found in large grass enclosures devoted to the maturing of fighting-bulls, where it is not very safe to hunt for them. On April 23rd we found two nests, one with a single egg, the other with an egg lying near, on which my man put his foot! On April 30th we returned, and the nest with one egg was empty, whilst the nest which had been empty contained one egg. I revisited the spot on May 12th, and found that both nests had been trampled upon by cattle. I hunted about, and eventually flushed a female; took a cast back, and fifteen yards from where she rose found a nest of five beautiful olive-green eggs. I believe that this is an unusually large clutch. All three nests were rather deep scratches lined with a few bits of dead grass. The eggs were nearly fresh.

#### ÆDICNEMUS SCOLOPAX.

The Thick-knee is common on the marismas. Several eggs were laid on the bare ground, without any sign of a nest, and often in the footprints of horses or cattle. Fresh eggs were found from May 1st to May 26th; they are sometimes laid at intervals of several days.

#### GLAREOLA PRATINCOLA.

Abundant. It was not till May 12th that we found full sets of three eggs, laid on the sun-baked marismas. In one case two nests were within a few inches of each other. Pratincoles have a curious trick of extending their wings on the ground and flapping them as if wounded, the head being

always turned towards the intruder, and this long before eggs are laid. I killed one bird which was nearly white.

*ÆGIALITIS CANTIANA.*

Common. A set of three eggs was found on April 30th. Curiously enough, these eggs were more incubated than others found subsequently.

*VANELLUS VULGARIS.*

Very common; nesting on the dry marisma—often in company with Redshanks. Fresh eggs were seen on April 28th.

*RECURVIROSTRA AVOCETTA.*

Abundant. On one little island of particularly dry mud I saw a dozen or more nests within a circle of fifteen yards. The eggs are taken by the score for eating; the white is transparent when boiled, and they are palatable.

*HIMANTOPUS CANDIDUS.*

Very numerous and more widely distributed than the last species, breeding on hard or wet ground; sometimes the nest is slightly raised in some low scrub, while there is more material in it than is generally the case with the *Limicolæ*. When the nesting-places are disturbed the birds shew extreme anxiety, flying round and uttering a plaintive cry. Our first nest was found on April 30th.

*TOTANUS CALIDRIS.*

Abundant. I once saw a regular flock rise from their nests when a Raven came by; they dashed at him continually, and twice made him settle on the ground; eventually he departed down wind, followed by the screaming hosts for some distance. Fresh eggs were seen from April 30th.

*STERNA MINUTA.*

Common, laying on the dry marisma. The first eggs were taken on May 13th, but it was not until the 26th that we found any number. No nests are made, the eggs being placed on the hard ground. One little colony with eight sets could have been covered with a tablecloth. Two eggs seem to be the usual number, and only once did I see three.

## STERNA ANGLICA.

Common. The nests are robbed by the natives almost daily and the wretched birds are continually forced to change their breeding-places, which are generally on a dry spot on the marisma. At one place I saw quite a hundred single eggs dropped on the bare ground without the slightest attempt at a nest. The eggs are three in number, if you are lucky enough to find a full set. I often found those of the Gull-billed Tern in nests of the Slender-billed Gull, which at first led me to believe that the Terns sometimes constructed nests for themselves.

## HYDROCHELIDON HYBRIDA.

This, to my mind the most graceful of all the European Terns, was exceedingly common, breeding in large numbers on the wet marisma. The nests are a mass of dead reeds floating on the water, two feet deep, and placed in growing rushes. They are just like those of Grebes, with the centre hollowed out and a few green rushes added. Laying commenced about April 30th, as we found a few nests on that day with one and two eggs; on May 3rd any number, mostly containing three eggs. I never saw one of these birds splash into the water when feeding in the way that the Little, Common, and Arctic Terns so frequently do, the food being taken from the surface.

## HYDROCHELIDON NIGRA.

Numerous, breeding in much the same situations as *H. hybrida*, but in much shallower water; the nests were smaller, rather better made, and often fixed to a lump of mud or cow-dung which nearly reached the surface of the water. On May 13th numbers of them contained slightly incubated eggs.

## LARUS GELASTES.

The Slender-billed Gulls are not common, and are in a fair way to be driven off the marisma if the present persecution goes on. They breed in small colonies, or sometimes singly, along with Gull-billed Terns. On April 30th I found six nests, each containing one egg; a few days later not a bird was to be seen, the egg-gatherers had driven

them off. On May 23rd I took fourteen single eggs and substituted those of the Gull-billed Tern. On May 25th all the nests had been cleared and the birds driven away by a party of three men with large baskets. Further on we *did* find a few nests which had been overlooked, two of which contained three eggs, and most of the others two—all “just turned.” One set were quite white, many others white with black and grey markings, and few lightish brown on a buff ground with darker marks. The nests were substantial, some being lined with a few Flamingo’s feathers, and all were placed on dry land, near the edge of a laguna.

I should like to mention that I twice saw a black- (not *brown-*) headed Gull, which I believe to have been *L. melanocephalus*. It was evidently not breeding and was quite alone, while it flew right off on our approach.

PODICIPES NIGRICOLLIS.

Uncommon. I saw Black-necked Grebes and found two nests on the Laguna Santa Olalla on April 29th which looked ready for laying ; but as they were still empty on May 14th, I concluded that the eggs had been taken. Several nests were found on a rushy swamp on Lucio Real in May, the eggs being stained a dark mahogany colour.

PODICIPES FLUVIATILIS.

Numerous. Nests were found from May 2nd onward ; one contained the large number of seven eggs.

---

VI.—*On a small Collection of Birds from Efulen in Cameroon, W. Africa.* By R. BOWDLER SHARPE, LL.D.

(Plate IV.)

MR. G. L. BATES, who has sent us several good collections from French Congo and Gaboon, has now forwarded a very interesting series of birds from Efulen, in the German Colony of Cameroon, and, in a letter, has given me the following account of the locality :—

“ This, as you know, is a forest-country, entirely covered with a large and thick growth of trees, except where they